

Dearly Beloved,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

August 31, 2025, Third Sunday after the Feast of Assumption

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 24:12-17, 1 Samuel 3:16-21, Ezekiel 18:21-24

NT: James 5:1-6, 2 Corinthians 10:1-7, Holy Gospel St Matthew 17:22-27

Holy Evangelion, St Matthew 17:22-27

²² As they were gathering^[a] in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, ²³ and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.” And they were greatly distressed.

²⁴ When they came to Caper'na-um, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, “Does not your teacher pay the tax?” ²⁵ He said, “Yes.” And when he came home, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their sons or from others?” ²⁶ And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. ²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”

Reflections:

A hero emerges through phases of training, trials, failures or defeats even unto death and ultimately a triumphant rising. Life has its ups and downs to strike a balance. Unless one falls ill, one wouldn't experience healing. Some would say that out of all the efforts that humans invest, 10 percent of such attempts can fail. ***True success and victory lie in the readiness to attempt to act without worrying about the result.*** APJ Abdul Kalam beautifully narrated the story of Indian Space Research in his most sought-after book 'Wings of Fire' where he outlines the tough phases of several repeated failures before every successful launch of a new vehicle. The current achievements of ISRO took its roots in once upon a time carrying parts of rockets on bicycles from the space center to the launching pad. Without such humble beginnings and the eventual evolution through innumerable trials and errors, no establishment of success would have been possible. Several countries achieved their independence through eras of complexities like invasion, suppression, oppression and systematized tortures where people realized the need of liberation and they fought back to protect their own cultural and heritage values through many sacrifices which finally resulted in a liberation. *All the survivors of such suffering and oppression at a public level or personal level will have the story of keeping up hope, unfailing endurance, growing tolerance while daring to face the worst with a determined fighting back, and holding onto faith until the end.*

Jesus set an example of this journey to ultimate victory through enduring rejection, suspicion, scandals, blames, legal execution, the worst humiliation, pain, and suffering unto death. All this was possible by keeping Himself free from sin. No social or legal authorities could find Him guilty. Today's passage talks of how Jesus used an approach of fairness and compliance with what the earthly authorities asked of Him and His disciples regardless of only Him knowing that He was both – fully divine and fully human. As the son of God, Jesus could have spoken back to the authorities or could have found ways to not pay the taxes. *But He chose to go by what was expected of Him thus setting a good example for His disciples and followers to always follow.* In that odd moment of being questioned by the tax collectors, only He could have answered with such correctness - of the provider of the shekel and how it had to be used to pay out for His disciples and Himself because He did not want His disciples to be bound by any awkward moments of repression. The more society looked for ways to taint Him, the more - Christ's soul remained pure. His intention was always holy. His character and personality were of innocence. He didn't corrupt himself for any benefit, even to skip the penalty of death. Adam died and was unable to be resurrected due to his polluting of himself by replacing God's will with Satanic desires of becoming God through the act of unholy consuming.

Why is the world becoming unhealthier with more sickness and suffering? It is due to the unholy consuming everywhere. Selfishness is at its peak. No true love exists. More prayer maybe there, but more self centeredness exists. More of church in our lives, but with little growth of Him in us. More fasting maybe done but without broadening our mind and views. We cater to sickness through our lack of genuine care for fellow beings. **Selfishness is the worst illness that the world needs to be cured from. In our selfishness, we lie sick alone and die alone.** The feeling of loneliness and isolation has become an irremediable condition in the current world.

We need true spirituality to survive and succeed. We require healthy companionship and fellowship to fight against all odds. *In isolation, no one can survive.* The Lord has given us the church as His wonderful mysterious body for everyone to live together in His love. Love and togetherness are the resurrective force the Lord has given to us. While commanding "Love God and love each other as I have loved you." Jesus revealed the best remedy for all sufferings and sickness even unto death. Once we understand Christ's mind and what He revealed to us about how to live through setting His life as the perfect example, we would change, the church would change, the world would change and life in every sense would experience a change. Then we would know that heaven is real and very much here with us, within us and we become heavens too!

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

August 29, Feast of the Beheading of St John the Baptist

August 31, HG Mathews Mar Ivanios Metropolitan Parettu, 45th anniversary, entombed in Mar Kuriakose Dayara, Pampady

From our previous updates:

Parish Picnic went well... Thanks to all.

We had a fun-filled day out at the Mississauga Valley Park on Sat Aug 23rd. The park space we got was so convenient with perfect weather. Games and sports were well organised. The food was tasty and delicious. The fellowship we all had was wonderful. Our children had a joyful day with their friends. The raffle was well supported by our members from which we collected 700 CAD. We sincerely thank our MC, all organisations, coordinators, volunteers and all participants for such a memorable day. We look forward to the next in 2026 with more fun and more participation.

HH Baselios Marthoma Paulose II Memorial Food Drive: The collected food stuff in boxes were handed over to Seva Food Bank. They came to church on Thursday Aug 28th morning and picked up the boxes. We thank MMVS for organizing and all our members for contributing towards this project.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS: Please note in your calendar

1. **Celebrating 1700th year of the Council of Nicaea:** Our parish will be organizing an event including elocution competition connected to the theme and choir presentations involving the Malankara Orthodox Church parishes in Toronto Region. Probably in the Fall season. Date, time and other details shall be announced soon.
2. **September 01-08, Ettunompu**
3. **September 07, Sunday:** Onasadya
4. **September 07, Sunday** School Reopening
5. **September 07, Sunday:** Feast of Theotokos, Holy Qurbana, Intercessory Prayer, Nerchavilampu.
6. **September 14, Sunday:** Feast of the Cross. Morning prayer at 08.30 AM followed by Holy Qurbana and liturgy of the Cross.
7. **October 12, Sunday:** Parish Nite 2025

8. October 19, Sunday: Harvest **Festival – 2025**

Birth Announcement:

With gratitude to Almighty God, we are delighted to share the joyful news that Jibin Johnny and Soniya Philip(J37) have been blessed with a baby boy Adriel Johnny today at 12:30 PM By God's grace, both mother and child are doing well. We thank the Lord for this precious gift of new life and pray that the newborn may grow in health, wisdom and the love of Christ.

Congratulations to the proud parents and grandparents

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS:

Details of upcoming meetings shall be announced later.

FOR OUR ATTENTION & TO NOTE:

Children, please occupy front benches during our Liturgical Services

Kindly avoid crowding at the back of the church. A few concerns.

- Due to safety concerns and for assuring an undistracted worship space, we request all our members to proceed to the front rows except those that are reserved for children when we enter the temple. It would be a bit difficult for our volunteers to suggest moving to the front during the service as it would cause distraction and noise. We need to avoid crowding at the entrance and stair areas as this has raised safety concerns.
- Please be considerate to our senior members to help them find seats or while they try to access the washroom. A slip or a hit should be avoided in any circumstance.
- Please be watchful at the shoe rack area which is also the entrance to both washrooms.
- We request our parents to attend our children not to pull the alarm lever at the back wall.

Hand Waving Machine & Common Absolution Prayer for all communicants

The hand waving machine has been installed at the church entrance for taking count of the communicants. Whoever wishes to take Holy Communion, upon entering the temple, please wave your hand once at the machine. Please be aware that after the Nicene Creed, the machine shall be disabled. Absolution shall be done during the morning prayer.

WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

August 31, Sunday –

Sunday School Teachers meeting after refreshment

August 31- OCYM upperi sale, please support the initiatives.

LIVE streaming has been reactivated: All services' Live Streaming is now available.

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of St Isaac this Sunday.

May the Gracious Lord keep us from all harm and heal the entire world.

Next Week

Sept 07, Fourth Sunday after the Feast of Assumption

Scriptural Readings:

OT: Exodus 3:1-2, 11-14, Job 1:1-5, Isaiah 1:16-20

NT: 1 Peter 2:1-5, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23, Holy Gospel St Mark 6:1-6

Yours in Christ

Thomas John Achen

Email ID: fr.thomaspjohn@gmail.com

Mobile: (416) 570 5610

<https://www.sgotoronto.org>